

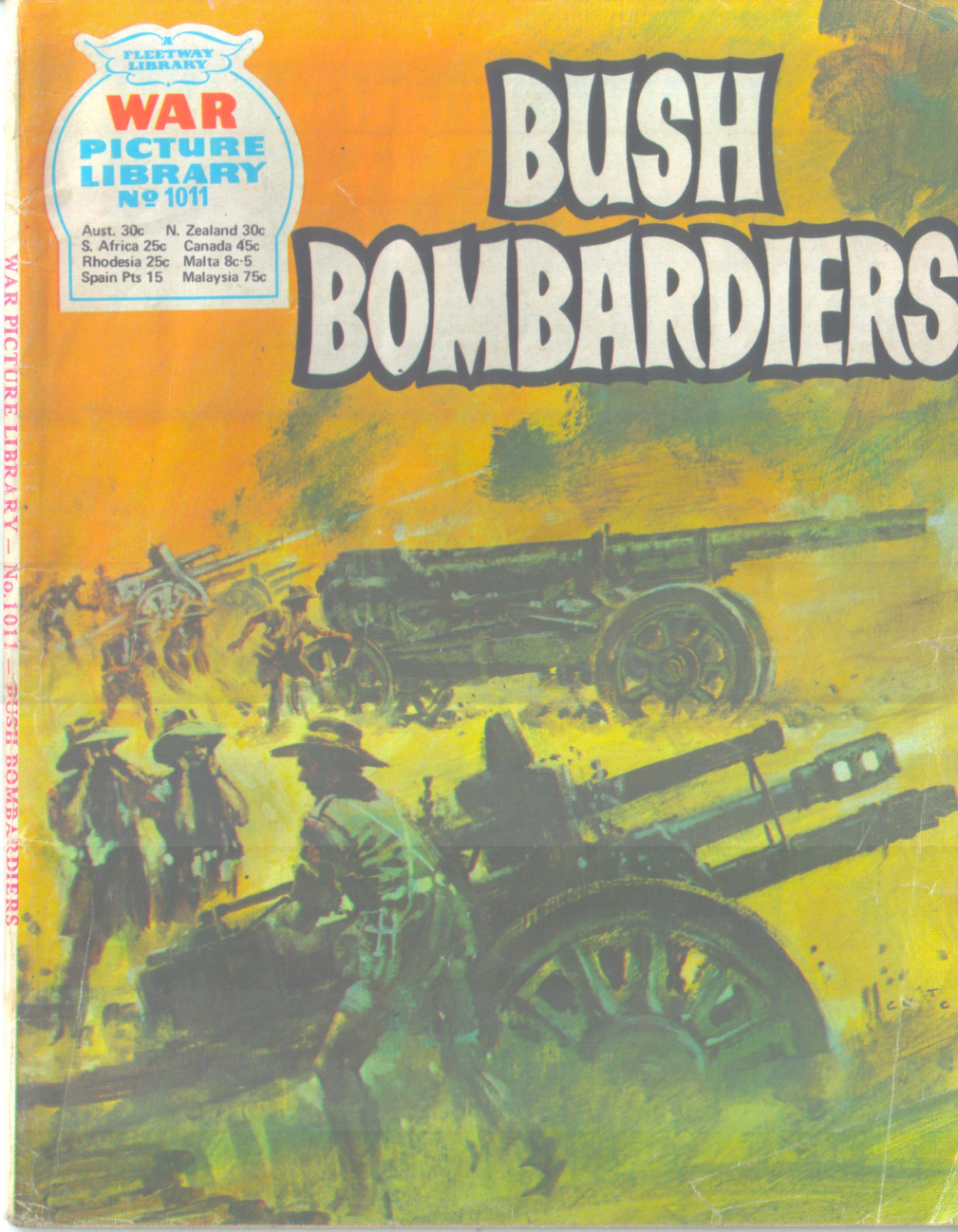
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# BUSH BOMBARDIERS

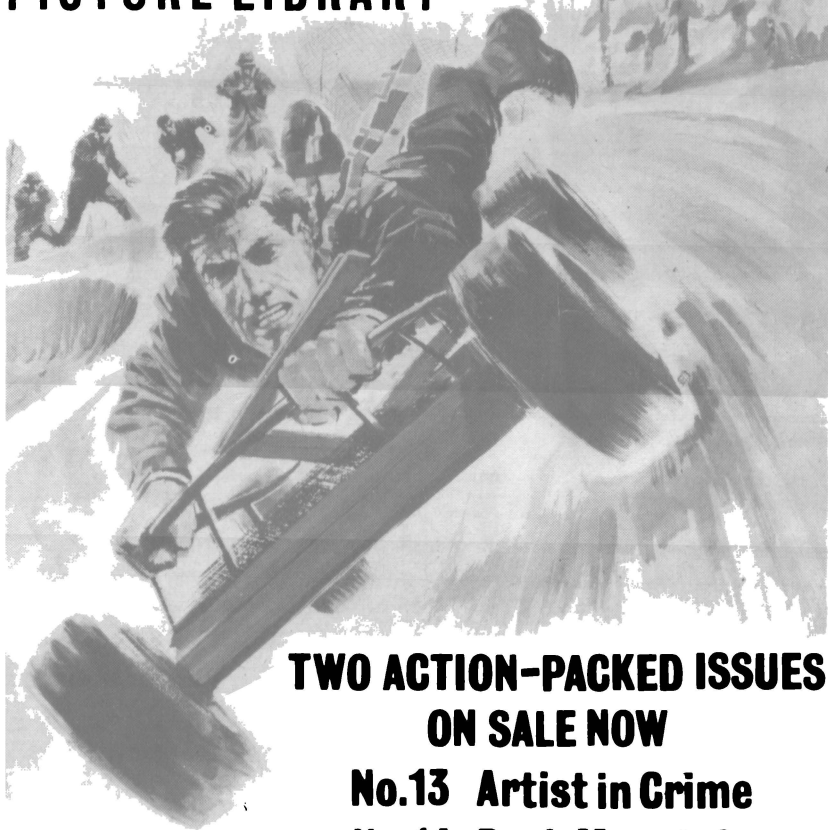
WAR PICTURE LIBRARY - No. 1011 - BUSH BOMBARDIERS



**TOPS for ACTION! TOPS for DRAMA!**

# **TOP SECRET**

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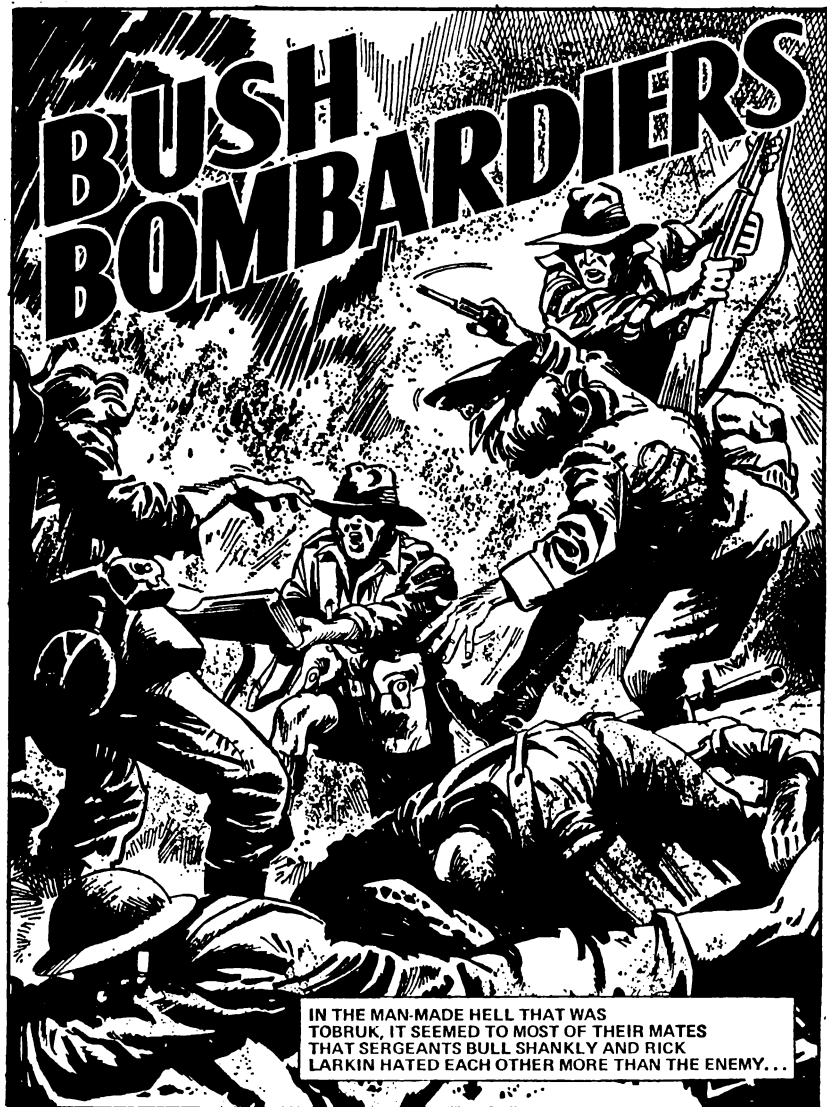


**TWO ACTION-PACKED ISSUES  
ON SALE NOW**

**No.13 Artist in Crime**

**No.14 Dark Mountain**

# BUSH BOMBARDIERS



IN THE MAN-MADE HELL THAT WAS TOBRUK, IT SEEMED TO MOST OF THEIR MATES THAT SERGEANTS BULL SHANKLY AND RICK LARKIN HATED EACH OTHER MORE THAN THE ENEMY...

## Chapter I.

**THE SUNDOWNER**

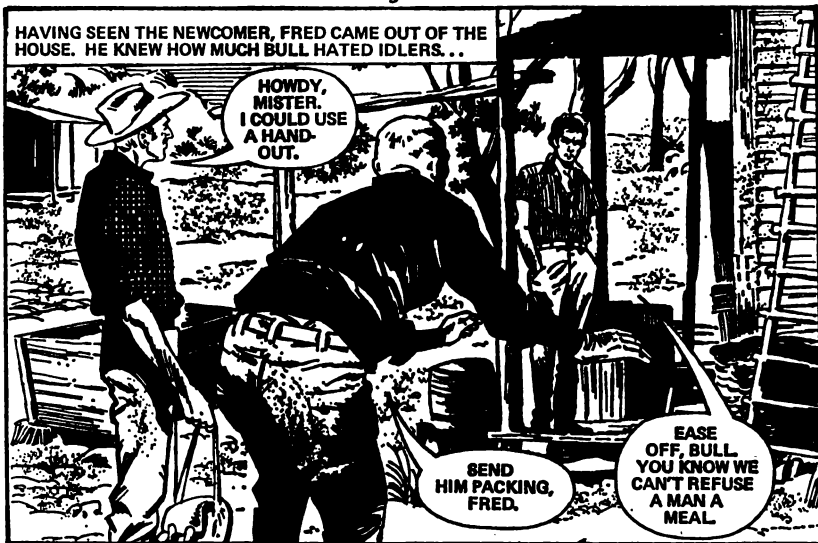
IT WAS LATE AUGUST, 1939, AND YOUNG FRED MCKAY LOOKED UP FROM A PILE OF UNPAID BILLS. AFTER THREE SEASONS OF DROUGHT, THE SMALL AUSTRALIAN SHEEP-FARM HE HAD INHERITED WAS DEEPLY IN DEBT...



IT HAD BEEN A HARD DAY, AND BULL AND THE TWO SHEARERS, WERE READY FOR A MEAL. SO WAS THE MAN WHO STROLLED TOWARDS THEM...

ANOTHER SUNDOWNER !  
IN TIME FOR GRUB AND TOO LATE TO WORK FOR IT.





AFTER THE SHEARERS HAD LEFT, FRED, BULL AND THE STRANGER LINGERED AT THE TABLE...



FRED HAD NEVER UNDERSTOOD HOW A MAN COULD CHOOSE SUCH A LIFE...

DON'T YOU EVER WISH YOU HAD SOME RESPONSIBILITY? SURELY, YOU HAVE SOME PRIDE?

ONLY PRIDE HIS KIND'S GOT IS IN DODGIN' ALL ALONG THE LINE.

DODGING? I'M ON MY WAY TO WARRAMONGA TO ENLIST. FEEL AN ARMY PACK WOULD MAKE ME FEEL AT HOME.

THE WORDS WERE UNEXPECTED. SUDDENLY, THE PROSPECT OF WAR BECAME MORE REAL ON THIS LITTLE STATION IN THE OUTBACK. BULL WAS UNIMPRESSED.

THE ARMY! THAT'S A LAUGH!

WELL YOU CAN'T GO ON TONIGHT - YOU CAN KIP DOWN IN THE HARNESS-SHED.

FRED SEEMED SCARCELY TO HAVE CLOSED HIS EYES WHEN HE WAS ROUSED BY SHOUTS. THE GLARE OF FLAMES FILLED HIS ROOM...

FIRE! THAT'S ALL I NEED!

THE HARNESS-SHED WAS ALMOST GONE,  
AND THE WOOL-SHED BLAZING FIERCELY.

THE  
CRAZY LOON'S  
SENT UP  
THE WHOLE  
WORKS!

A black and white comic panel showing a man in a white shirt and dark trousers running through a scene of destruction. He is shouting, and his speech bubble reads "THE CRAZY LOON'S SENT UP THE WHOLE WORKS!". In the background, there is a large fire with thick smoke rising from it. To the left, there is a large, dark, mechanical-looking structure. The scene is chaotic, with debris and flames visible.

THE FIGHT WAS HOPELESS. SOON, ALL THAT  
REMAINED WAS A HEAP OF SMOULDERING RUBBLE.

THIS IS  
YOUR DOIN'!  
YOU IDLE  
GOOD-FOR-  
NOTHIN'!

EASE  
OFF, MATE.  
IT WASN'T MY  
FAULT!

YOU KNOW  
THAT OLD STOVE  
WAS UNRELIABLE,  
BULL.

A black and white comic panel showing three men in a pile of rubble. The man on the left is shouting, "THIS IS YOUR DOIN'! YOU IDLE GOOD-FOR-NOTHIN'!". The man in the middle is responding, "EASE OFF, MATE. IT WASN'T MY FAULT!". The man on the right is replying, "YOU KNOW THAT OLD STOVE WAS UNRELIABLE, BULL.". The scene is filled with debris, including wooden beams and a large barrel. The background shows a large, dark, mechanical-looking structure, similar to the one in the first panel.

THE HOT-TEMPERED BULL  
HURLED HIMSELF FORWARD.  
HE WAS A MASSIVE MAN, BUT  
RICK WAS HARD AND WIRY...

UGH I

TYPICAL I  
ALL BEEF  
AND NO  
BRAIN I

PACK IT  
IN, YOU  
IDIOTS I

IT WAS TEN MINUTES OF BRUTAL SLOGGING, WITH  
NEITHER MAN WILLING TO ADMIT DEFEAT...

KEEP  
OUT OF  
THIS, FRED I  
UGH I I  
AIN'T DONE  
YET.

YOU'RE BOTH  
OUT ON YOUR FEET -  
AND WHAT GOOD  
WILL IT DO ?

FIVE MINUTES LATER THEY  
HAD ALL HAD ENOUGH...

I'VE HAD IT,  
BULL. I'LL SELL  
WHAT'S LEFT TO PAY  
THE DEBTS.  
AND JOIN UP.

WHERE YOU GO,  
I GO. AND IF  
EVER I RUN INTO  
YOU AGAIN, LARKIN,  
WE'LL SETTLE  
THIS GOOD.

'TAINT  
LIKELY—  
IT'S A BIG  
ARMY.

BUT RICK WAS WRONG. AFTER SETTLING HIS  
AFFAIRS, FRED WENT WITH BULL TO THE NEAREST  
RECRUITING OFFICE. THE MAN IN FRONT  
OF THEM AT THE DESK WAS RICK LARKIN...

THERE'S LUCK  
FOR YOU. POUND  
TO A PINCH OF  
SALT WE END UP IN  
THE SAME MOB!

THE ARMY NEEDS YOU!

JOIN THE

## Chapter 2.

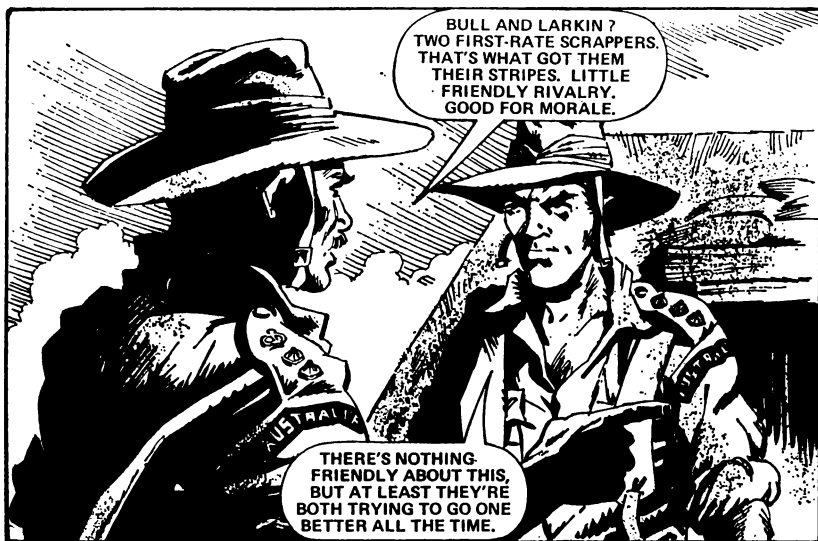
**DESERT RATS**

BY THE TIME ROMMEL SWEEPED DOWN PAST TOBRUK, THE THREE WERE HARDENED VETERANS. FRED, A CAPTAIN, BULL AND RICK, SERGEANTS. AND STILL THE OLD HATRED PERSISTED...



REPELLING THE FIRST GERMAN ATTACKS WITH LOSSES, THE AUSSIES HASTILY CLEARED OUT THE ITALIAN DEFENCES. COLONEL "RED" JOHNSON MADE HIS WAY ALONG THE LINE TO FRED.





IT SEEMED THE ENEMY HAD DRAWN BACK TO REGROUP, CONTENT TO BOMBARD THE DEFENDERS FROM A DISTANCE. BULL QUIETLY GOT HIS PLATOON TOGETHER...



WITH DARKNESS, THE RAIDERS CRAWLED CAUTIOUSLY THROUGH THE WIRE...



THE REST OF THE WAY THEY EDGED FORWARD IN SILENCE, GERMAN VOICES GUIDED THEM ON THE LAST LAP.

HIMMEL, FRANZ –  
THIS VERDAMMT DESERT  
IS COLD.

AT NIGHT, JA,  
BUT THE DAY I  
GIVE ME FRANCE  
ANY TIME.



BULL OPENED FIRE – A SIGNAL FOR A HAIL OF GRENADES ON THE THREE FOX-HOLES.

RUSH  
'EM I

ACHTUNG –  
AAAARGH I



SURPRISE WAS COMPLETE.  
WITHIN A MOMENT OR SO,  
THE FIGHT WAS OVER...

GRAB ANYTHING  
WE CAN USE —  
AND THOSE TWO  
PRISONERS.



TOLD OF WHAT BULL WAS UP TO, FRED LOOKED ANGRILY OUT OVER NO-MAN'S-LAND, AS THE  
GERMANS HURLED SHELLS OVER IN ANGRY RETALIATION...

REMEMBER TELLING  
BULL HE WAS ALL  
BEEF AND NO BRAIN,  
RICK? LOOKS LIKE  
YOU WERE RIGHT.

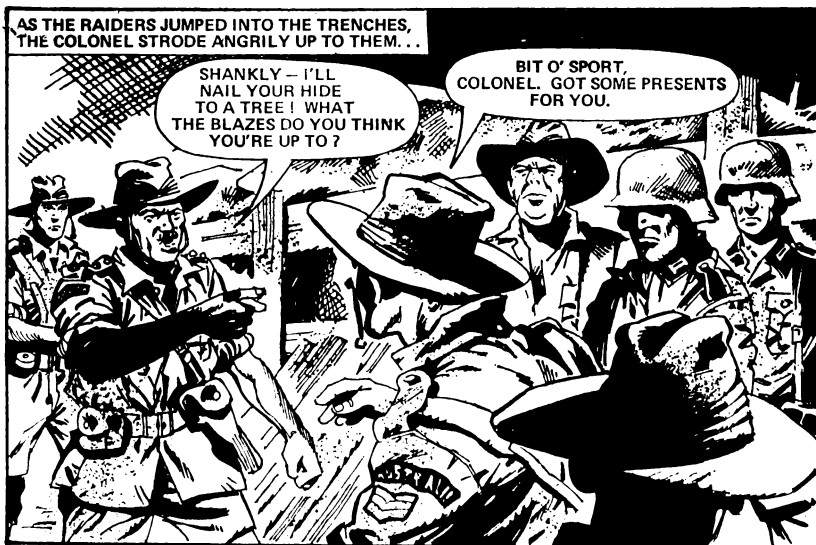
WELL, HE'LL BE  
LUCKY TO GET THROUGH  
THAT LOT!



THEN A BELLOWING VOICE ROARED  
OUT FROM AMONG THE SHELL-BURSTS...



AS THE RAIDERS JUMPED INTO THE TRENCHES,  
THE COLONEL STRODE ANGRILY UP TO THEM...



THE COLONEL LOOKED AT THE PRISONERS  
AND THE CAPTURED MACHINE GUNS...



RICK WENT THROUGH THE CONCRETE-WALLED  
TRENCH TO HIS OWN GUN-PIT. IT WAS PLAIN HIS OWN  
PLATOON HAD HEARD ABOUT BULL'S SORTIE...



RICK WAS NOT AS QUICK TO ANSWER AS THEY EXPECTED. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, RICK KNEW FEAR, AND FOUGHT TO CONTAIN IT. BUT RICK KNEW THAT BULL DID NOT THINK ABOUT THE RISKS, BUT JUST WENT AHEAD. . .

THE IDEA OF CRAWLIN' OUT THERE, THROUGH MINES, NOT KNOWIN' WHERE JERRY IS - I GOT TOO MUCH IMAGINATION. THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER WAY.



HIS MATES WAITED, WONDERING. IT WAS NOT LIKE RICK TO AVOID A CHALLENGE. . .

GIVE ME TIME. I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.



BY DAWN, THE SEEDS OF A PLAN HAD TAKEN SHAPE. MEMORIES OF THEIR FIRST PUSH ROSE IN HIS MIND, THE ATTACK WHEN THEY HAD TAKEN THIS SAME FORTRESS...



AFTER BREAKING THROUGH THE OUTER DEFENCES, THEY HAD MET WITH FIRE FROM HEAVY MACHINE-GUNS PLACED WELL INSIDE THE DEFENCES...





FRED AND THE COLONEL  
TURNED IN ALARM AS  
THE TWO ENGINES ROARED  
INTO LIFE BEHIND THEM...

WHAT THE  
BLAZES NOW I  
I'VE GOT A  
SHOWER OF WILD  
DINGOES, NOT A  
FLAMIN' BUNCH OF  
SOLDIERS. CAN'T  
YOU TAME THIS  
RABBLE?

IT'S LARKIN —  
HE MAKES HIS OWN  
RULES, JUST LIKE  
SHANKLY! NO WONDER  
THE POMMIES SAY  
WE'VE NO DISCIPLINE!

WELL OUT BEYOND THE PERIMETER,  
OTHER EYES SAW THE DUST  
RAISED BY THE CARRIERS...

HIMMEL —  
WHAT A NERVE I  
GET ON TO  
THE BATTERY,  
SCHNELL!



RICK HAD SCARCELY STARTED HIS SEARCH WHEN A SHELL CRASHED DOWN NEARBY...

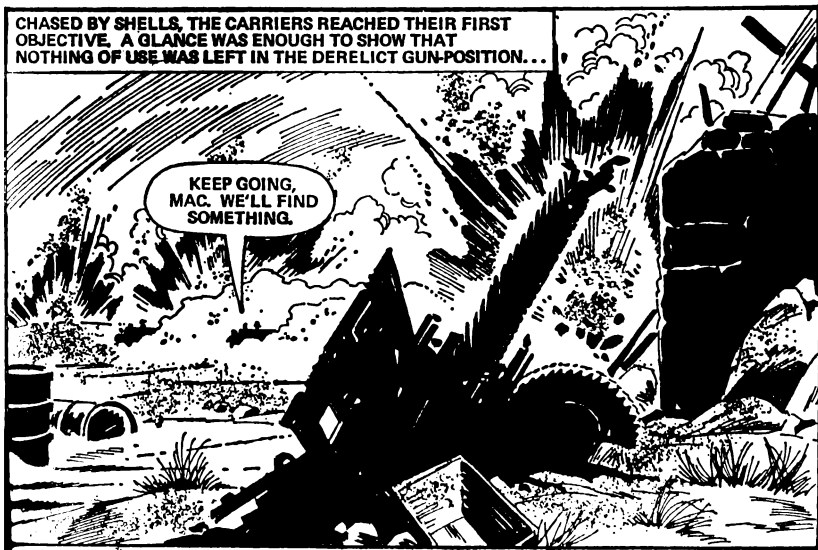
THAT'S  
DANDY! WE'VE BEEN  
SPOTTED.

SPEED'S  
OUR BEST  
DEFENCE —  
AND ZIG-  
ZAGGING.



CHASED BY SHELLS, THE CARRIERS REACHED THEIR FIRST OBJECTIVE. A GLANCE WAS ENOUGH TO SHOW THAT NOTHING OF USE WAS LEFT IN THE DERELICT GUN-POSITION...

KEEP GOING,  
MAC. WE'LL FIND  
SOMETHING.



THE FAST MOVING CARRIERS MADE A DIFFICULT TARGET FOR LONG-RANGE HOWITZERS. GRIMLY, RICK PRESSED ON UNTIL THEY FOUND WHAT THEY SOUGHT...



TWO MACHINE GUNS AND AS MUCH AMMUNITION AS THEY COULD CARRY WERE QUICKLY SNATCHED FROM THE DUST AND RUBBLE...



THE SHELLS CHASED THE CARRIERS ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE LINE. AS THEY JUMPED DOWN AND RACED TO COVER, THE COLONEL EYED THE FOLLOWING PATTERN OF SHELLS...

EVERYBODY DOWN! THE IDIOTS HAVE BROUGHT BACK MORE THAN THEY BARGAINED FOR!



AS SHELLS DROPPED ALL AROUND, THE COLONEL BLASTED INTO RICK...

I HOPE THEY DON'T, COLONEL — WE GOT TWO MACHINE GUNS AND AMMO IN THERE.

LOT OF CRAZY ZOMBIES! THIS COULD KEEP UP FOR HOURS. IF THOSE CARRIERS GET HIT, YOU'LL BE FOR IT.



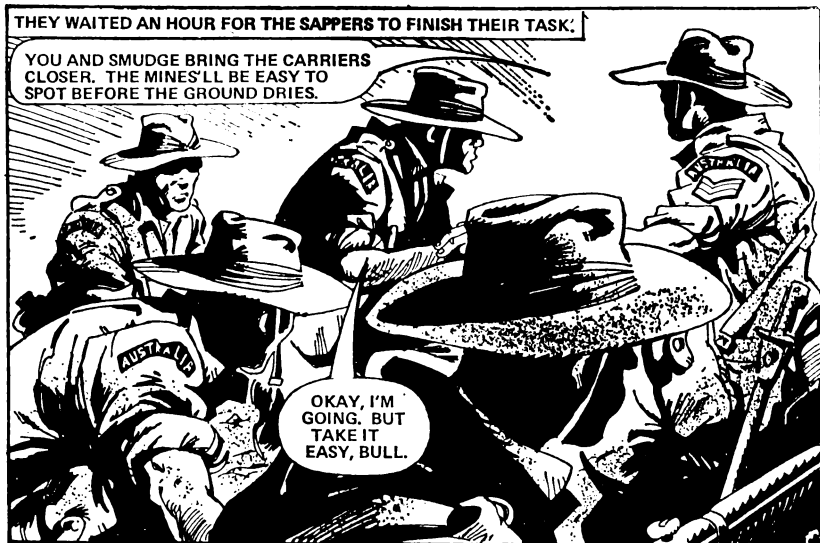


WITH TORRUK SITTING ACROSS THE ROAD BETWEEN TRIPOLI AND HIS FRONT LINE, ROMMEL LOST NO TIME IN BUILDING A ROAD ROUND THE PORT, BEYOND THE RANGE OF THE GUNS OF THE GARRISON...



NEWS OF THE BY-PASS SOON REACHED THE DEFENDERS, AND THEY COULD SEE THE LINE OF TELEGRAPH-POLES ADVANCING WITH THE ROAD...





QUICKLY, THE MINES WERE LIFTED —  
A NERVE-TINGLING JOB.

EASY DOES  
IT, COBBERS.  
WATCH OUT  
FOR BOOBY-  
TRAPS.

ONLY BULL  
COULD PULL A STUNT  
LIKE THIS — PINCHIN'  
JERRY MINES AND  
PUTTIN' 'EM ON OUR  
OWN FRONT.



WITHIN THE HOUR, THE CARRIERS HAD BROUGHT BACK THE STOLEN MINES. COLONEL JOHNSON WATCHED AS HIS FRONT WAS STRENGTHENED...

I FEEL BETTER ALL THE TIME.  
WITH THESE MINES AND THE  
MACHINE GUNS, WE CAN PUT UP  
A FIGHT IF JERRY TRIES ANYTHING.

GOOD  
WORK, BULL.

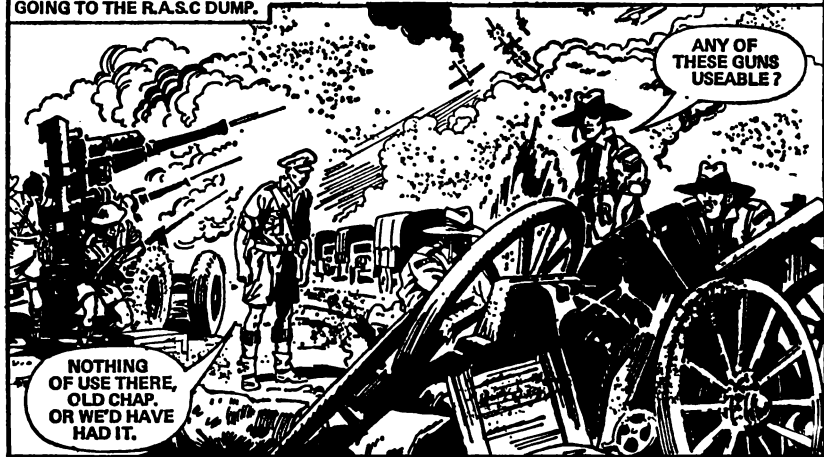
WELL — SOME  
OF US ARE  
BETTER AT IT  
THAN OTHERS.



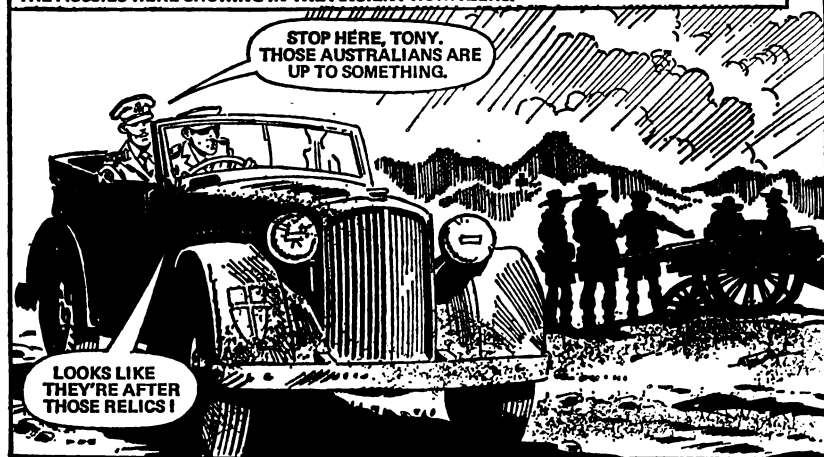
## Chapter 3.

**OPEN SIGHTS**

THE FOLLOWING DAY, RICK WAS SENT TO THE HARBOUR FOR SUPPLIES. AS ALWAYS, THEY WERE UNDER ATTACK, AND RICK PAUSED BY A DERELICT BATTERY OF ITALIAN GUNS BEFORE GOING TO THE R.A.S.C DUMP.



A STAFF-CAR STOPPED NEARBY, THE BRIGADIER APPARENTLY AMUSED BY THE INTEREST THE AUSSIES WERE SHOWING IN THE ANCIENT HOWITZERS.



THE YOUNG R.A. OFFICER  
WAS FINDING IT IMPOSSIBLE  
TO MOVE THE OBSTINATE RICK.

THESE CHAPS  
ARE OUT TO COMMIT  
SUICIDE, SIR! I  
WOULDN'T FIRE ONE  
OF THESE THINGS  
WITH A TWO-MILE  
LANYARD.

I DON'T KNOW,  
LIEUTENANT. WE  
CAN USE ANY GUN  
THAT WILL FIRE. GIVE  
OUR FRIENDS A FEW  
TIPS — AND THE  
BEST OF LUCK.

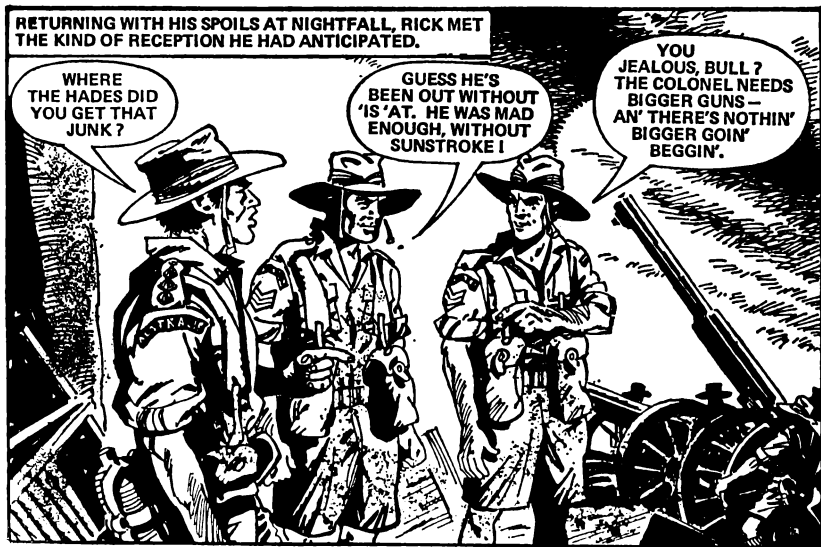
GOOD  
ON YER,  
GENERAL!

RETURNING WITH HIS SPOILS AT NIGHTFALL, RICK MET  
THE KIND OF RECEPTION HE HAD ANTICIPATED.

WHERE  
THE HADES DID  
YOU GET THAT  
JUNK?

GUESS HE'S  
BEEN OUT WITHOUT  
'IS 'AT. HE WAS MAD  
ENOUGH, WITHOUT  
SUNSTROKE!

YOU  
JEALOUS, BULL? THE  
COLONEL NEEDS  
BIGGER GUNS —  
AN' THERE'S NOTHIN'  
BIGGER GOIN' BEGIN'.



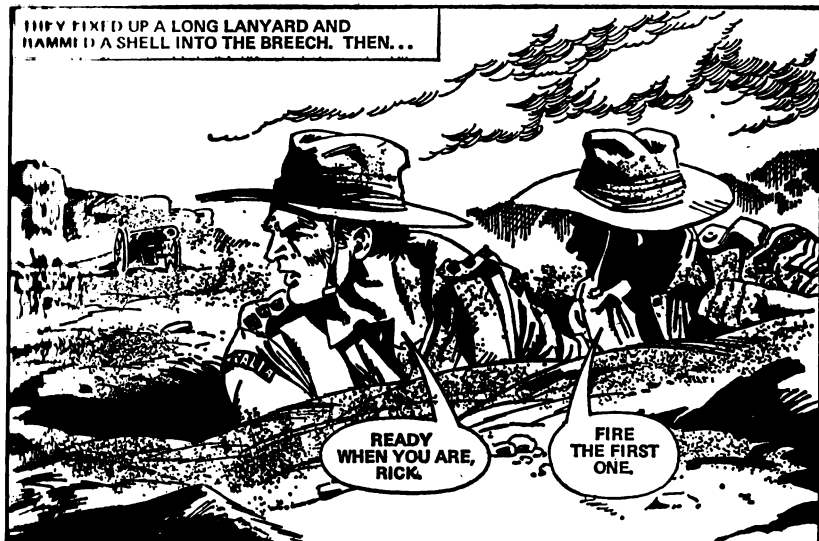
THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT, RICK'S PLATOON OILED AND POLISHED THE RUSTED PARTS ...



AT DAWN, THEY WERE READY FOR TESTING. BUT WHEN THEY WENT TO THE CRATES OF SHELLS...



THEY FIXED UP A LONG LANYARD AND HAMMED A SHELL INTO THE BREECH. THEN...



THE GUN COUGHED HALF-HEARTEDLY, AND THE SHELL CURVED LAZILY OVER THE PERIMETER TO FALL IN THE MINEFIELD, JUST AHEAD OF RICK AND FRED...



ANOTHER SHELL WAS LOADED.  
BUT WHEN THE LANYARD WAS  
JERKED, NOTHING HAPPENED...



RICK DID NOT GET TIME TO COMPLETE THE ORDER. WITHOUT WARNING, THE SMOULDERING  
CHARGE FIRED. THEY HEARD THE SHELL ROAR OVERHEAD...



TWO THOUSAND YARDS AWAY, IN THEIR FORWARD OBSERVATION POST, THE TWO GERMANS SAW AND HEARD THE SHELL LAND AHEAD OF THEM...

DID YOU SEE THE FLASH, FRIEDRICH?

NEIN, BUT THERE IS SMOKE NEAR THE PERIMETER.

THERE ARE NO LARGE WEAPONS ON THE WIRE. LOOK FARTHER BACK.

RICK'S THIRD SHOT SENT THE TWO GERMANS HASTILY TO GROUND. BY PURE CHANCE, IT CAME WITHIN A FEW YARDS OF THEIR FOX HOLE...

HIMMEL! THEY ARE RANGING ON US! WE MUST SPOT THEM BEFORE THEY BLOW US TO KINGDOM COME!



UNAWARE OF THE ALARM THEY HAD CAUSED, RICK AND HIS BUSH BOMBARDIERS WERE RELOADING. FRED CALLED BACK...

BETTER, RICK! TWO THOUSAND YARDS THAT TIME.

GOOD-OH I BANG IN TWO OF THE RED CHARGES THIS TIME!

NOW THEY'RE GOIN' TO BLOW THEMSELVES UP!

THE GUNS FIRED — AND FRIEDRICH POINTED IN ALARM.

SEE, LEUTNANT! RIGHT AT THE WIRE!

HIMMEL — YOU'RE RIGHT! AND THOSE ARE MEANT FOR US!

SEASONED ARTILLERYMEN, THE TWO WERE CERTAIN THAT THE SHELLING WOULD FOLLOW A PATTERN. HOW COULD THEY KNOW WHO THEY WERE UP AGAINST?

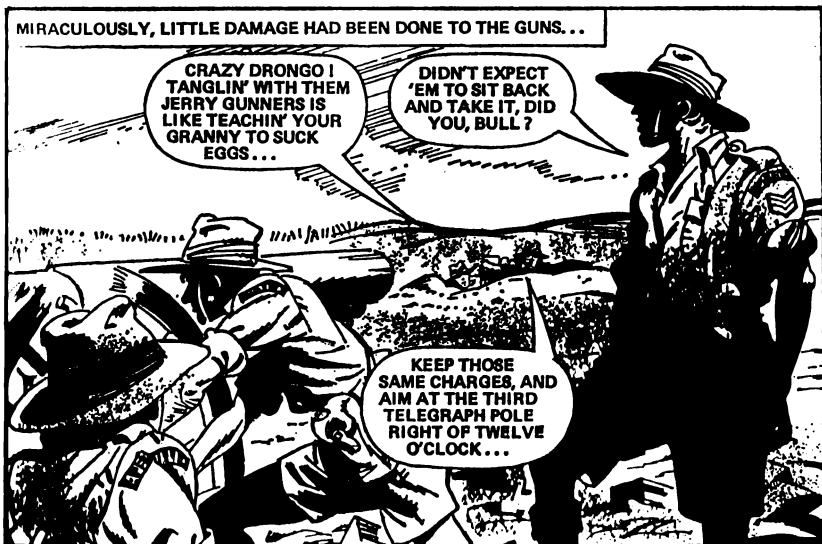


THE GERMAN FIRE WAS TOO ACCURATE FOR COMFORT, BUT DESPITE THE SHELL SPLINTERS AND DUST, FRED STAYED AT HIS POST ...



THE BARRAGE WAS HEAVY BUT BRIEF. CONTENT WITH A JOB WELL DONE, THE ENEMY SPOTTER SAT BACK TO ENJOY BREAKFAST...





IT DEVELOPED INTO A STAND-UP ARTILLERY DUEL, AND THE AUSSIES STUBBORNLY REFUSED TO TAKE COVER...

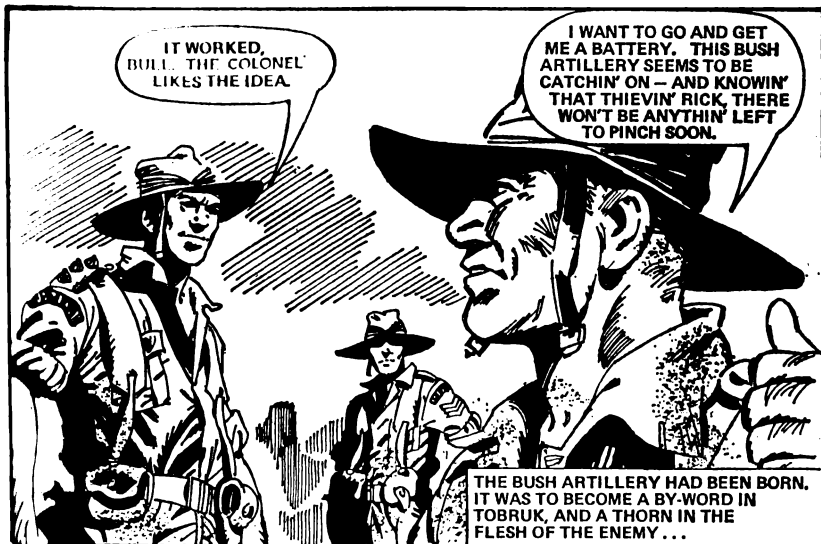
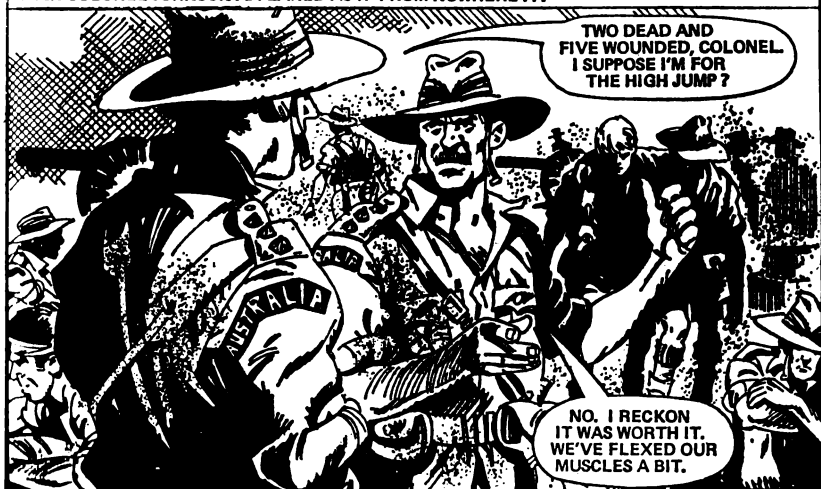
SCRUNGE A BIT  
MORE ELEVATION  
AND YOU'LL DROP RIGHT  
IN THEIR LAPS.

KEEP GOING,  
LADS. WE'LL SEE  
WHO JACKS IN  
FIRST!

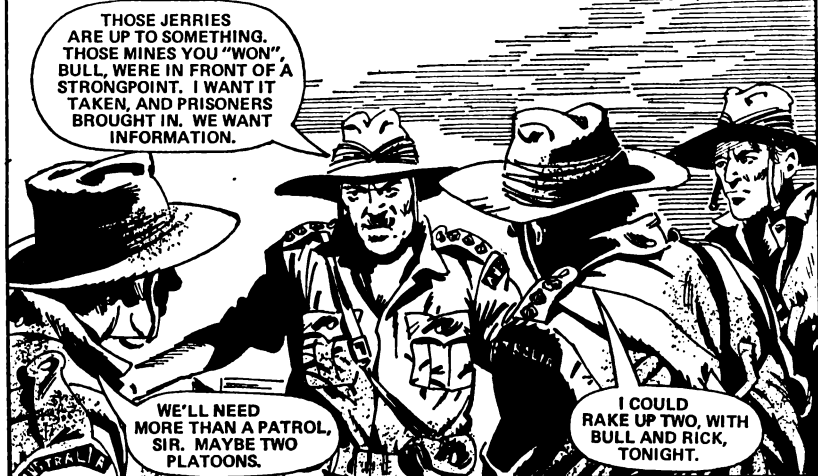
THE OLD ITALIAN HOWITZERS LACKED NOTHING IN HITTING POWER. ONE GERMAN GUN AFTER ANOTHER WAS SILENCED.

CEASE FIRE!  
TAKE COVER.  
TELL KRAMER  
WE MUST  
CHANGE OUR  
POSITION.

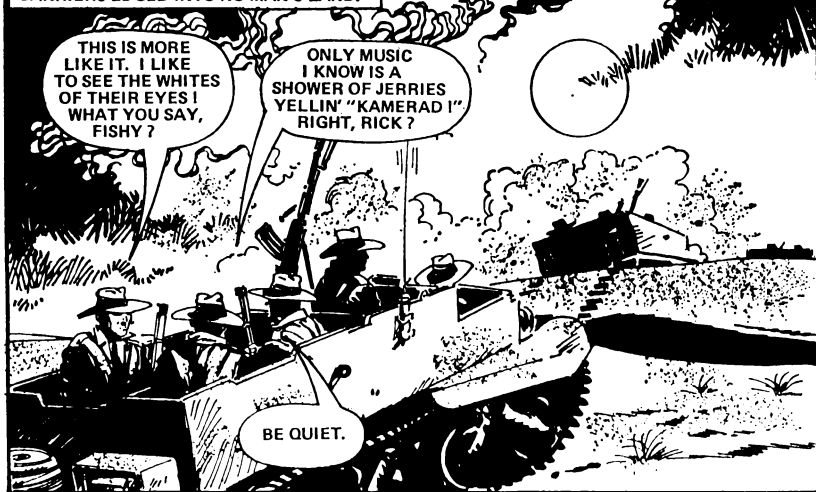
FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE GERMANS GAVE UP, FRED ORDERED A CEASE-FIRE.  
THEN COLONEL JOHNSON APPEARED AS IF FROM NOWHERE ...



DURING THE NEXT TWO DAYS, AN UNCANNY SILENCE FELL OVER THE PERIMETER. IT WAS A SILENCE THAT WORE ON COLONEL JOHNSON'S NERVES...



SOON AFTER DARK, THREE PACKED BREN CARRIERS EDGED INTO NO-MAN'S-LAND.



THE HUMBLE OF ARTILLERY COVERED THEIR APPROACH. SIX HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE ENEMY POST, FRED CALLED A HALT, LEAVING A DRIVER IN EACH CARRIER ...



FRED LED THEM FORWARD UNTIL THE ENEMY EARTHWORKS APPEARED AHEAD. ...

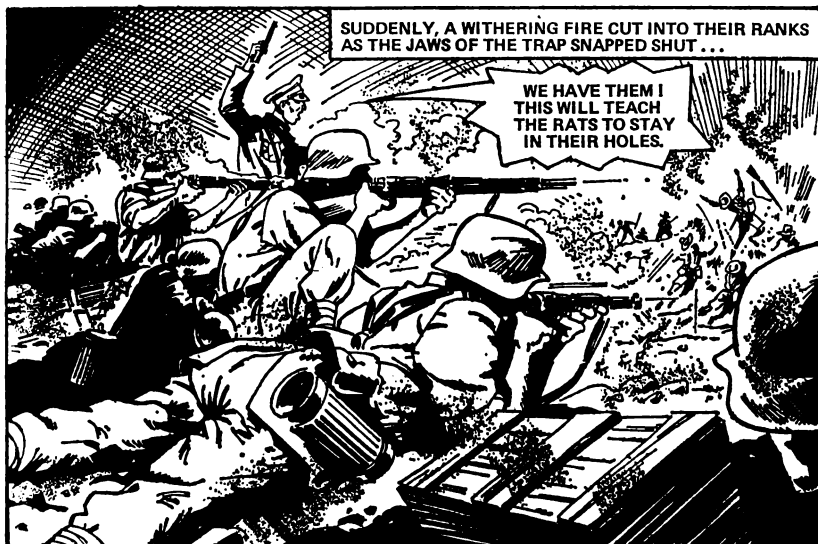


THE GRENADES LOBBED OVER.  
AS THEY EXPLODED, THE  
AUSSIES LEAPT TO THEIR FEET...



WITH GUNS BLAZING, THEY CHARGED FORWARD—  
BUT A SHOCK AWAITED THEM. THE STRONGPOINT  
WAS EMPTY...





THROWING DOWN THEIR GUNS, THE AUSTRALIANS WERE SOON SURROUNDED BY JEERING GERMANS...

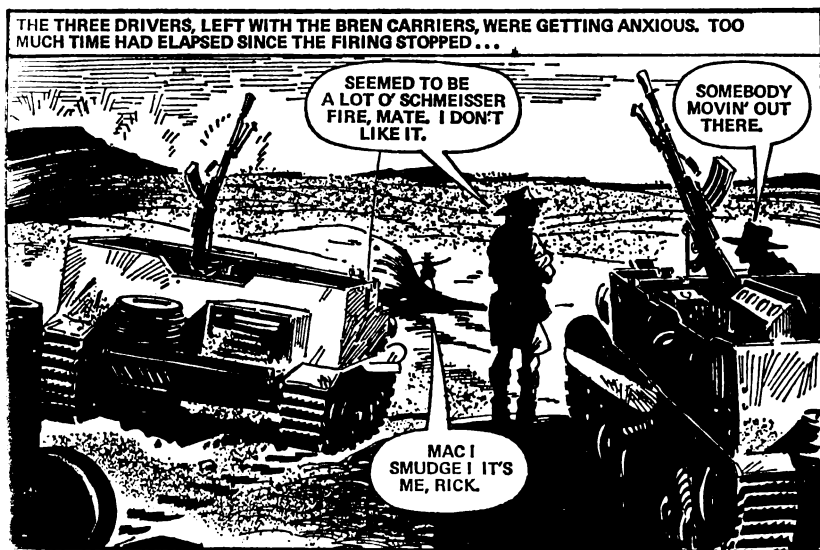
TAKE A DETAIL OF FOUR MEN AND ESCORT THE PRISONERS TO OUR H.Q.

JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN.

AS THE COLUMN WERE MARCHED FROM THE STRONGPOINT, FRED NOTICED RICK WAS MISSING...

DID HE GO DOWN, BULL?

NO! I SAW HIM SCUTTLE OUT INTO THE DESERT WHEN YOU SAID TO CHUCK IT. MAYBE HIS NERVE FAILED...



THE THREE DRIVERS SOON LEARNT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, AND THEY LISTENED AS RICK TOLD THEM HIS PLANS...



RICK KNEW THAT ON FOOT, THE MEN WOULD MAKE SLOW PROGRESS. HE TOOK A WIDE CIRCLE — AND SOON FOUND THAT LUCK WAS WITH HIM...



THE THREE CARRIERS BREASTED THE RISE AT FULL SPEED. A BURST FROM A BREN GUN CRACKLED ABOVE THE HEADS OF THE COLUMN...



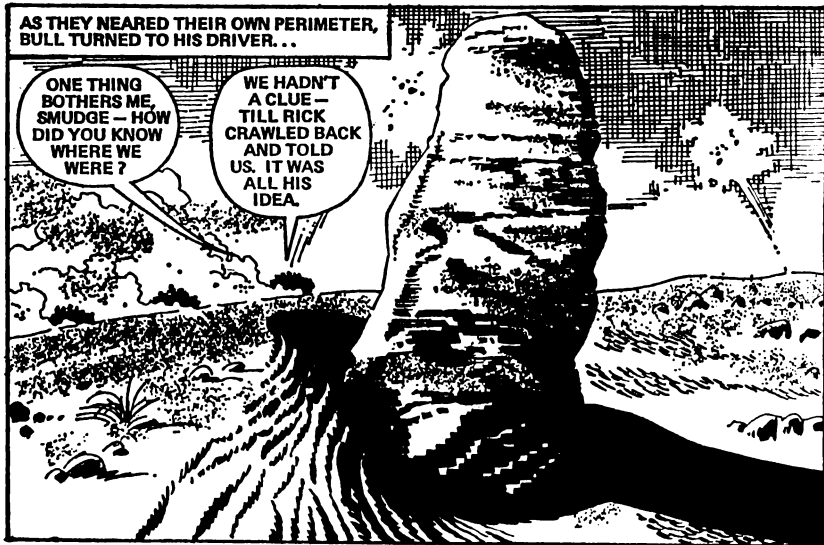
FACED WITH A LARGER FORCE, THE TOUGH FELDWEBEL PROVED TO BE A MAN OF SENSE...



THE LOADED CARRIERS SPED STRAIGHT THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES WITH BLAZING GUNS. . .



AS THEY NEARED THEIR OWN PERIMETER, BULL TURNED TO HIS DRIVER. . .



FIVE MINUTES LATER THEY WERE SAFE. . .

THE JERRIES WERE WAITING FOR US, COLONEL. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR RICK HERE, WE'D ALL BE IN THE BAG.

IT WAS A GREAT SHOW, ALL OF YOU. WE'LL GET THOSE JERRIES OVER TO H.Q. MAYBE THEY'LL TELL US WHAT THEIR MATES ARE UP TO.



ONE OF THE GERMANS DID TALK — FREELY. TOO FREELY FOR SOME OF THE STAFF OFFICERS. . .

HE BLABS TOO EASILY. EXTRA SUPPLIES TO BE RUSHED TO TRIPOLI. A DETERMINED THRUST AT SUEZ, USING THE BY-PASS. I THINK HE'S A PLANT.

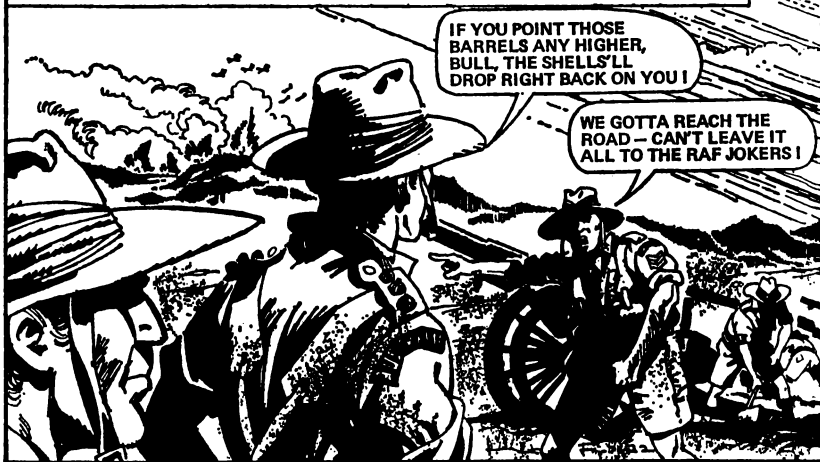


I DISAGREE. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THAT AUSSIE USING THE CARRIERS TO RESCUE HIS MATES, WE WOULD NEVER HAVE CAUGHT THIS MAN. THAT SUPPLY ROUTE MUST BE BLOCKED, GENTLEMEN.

## Chapter 4.

**COUNTER-FIRE!**

BULL'S WISH TO OBTAIN A BATTERY OF GUNS WAS FULFILLED A DAY LATER. HE WAS DETERMINED THAT THE DISTANT SUPPLY ROUTE WOULD BE BLOCKED...



IF YOU POINT THOSE BARRELS ANY HIGHER, BULL, THE SHELLS'LL DROP RIGHT BACK ON YOU!

WE GOTTA REACH THE ROAD - CAN'T LEAVE IT ALL TO THE RAF JOKERS!

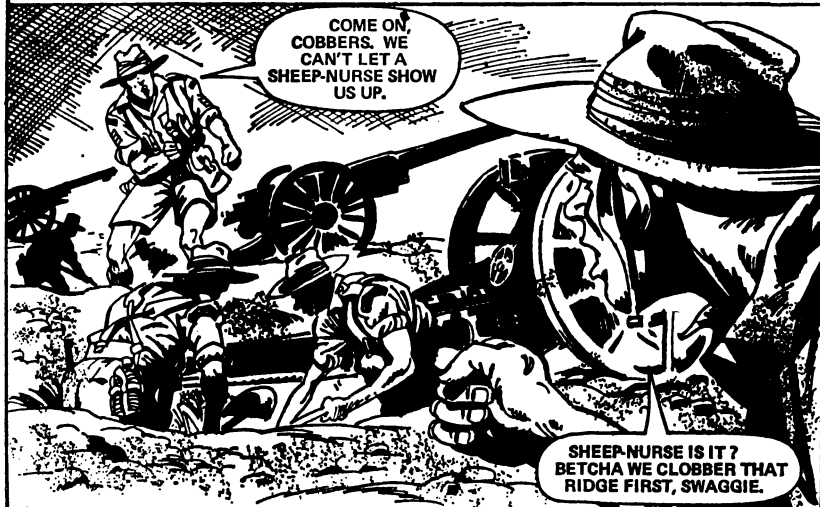
BULL'S FIRST VOLLEY SHOWED PROMISE...



YOU ALMOST MADE IT.

THAT SUNDOWNER WON'T BEAT THAT!

RICK HEARD THE RETORT AND URGED HIS MEN ON AS THEY DUG IN THEIR OWN GUNS...



BUT BULL'S RANGING SALVO HAD BEEN SPOTTED...

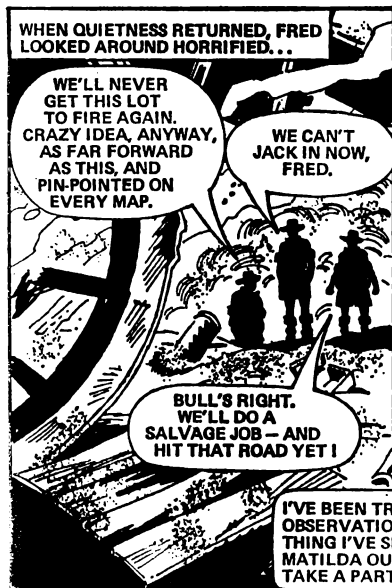


THE RUSH OF AIR PRODUCED BY APPROACHING SHELLS WAS ALL THE WARNING THE AUSSIES RECEIVED BEFORE A DEADLY CONCENTRATION OF FIRE SMASHED INTO THEIR POSITIONS. . .



INSIDE THE PERIMETER BRITISH 25 POUNDERS SWUNG INTO ACTION. THE ENEMY BATTERIES WERE JUST WITHIN RANGE OF THE MOST FORWARD GUNS. . .

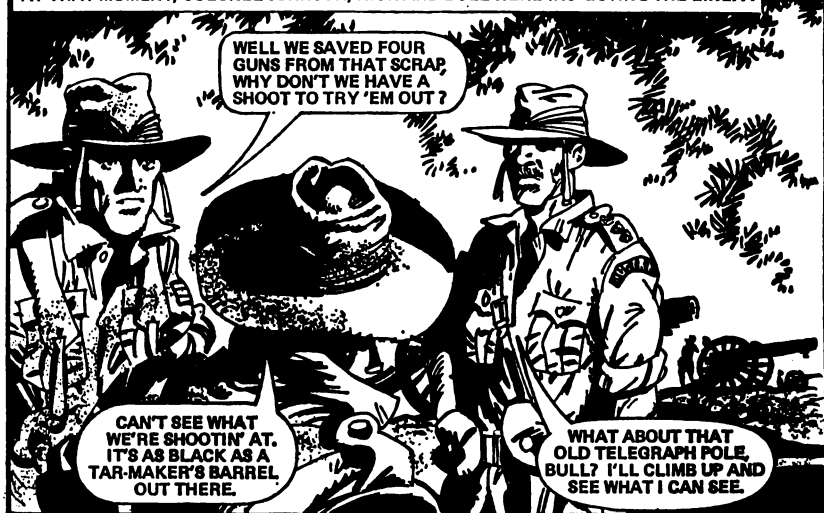




AS NIGHT FELL, A HUGE ENEMY CONVOY HAD HALTED FOR A REST, WEST OF TOBRUK. IT WAS TO BE A SHORT STOP...



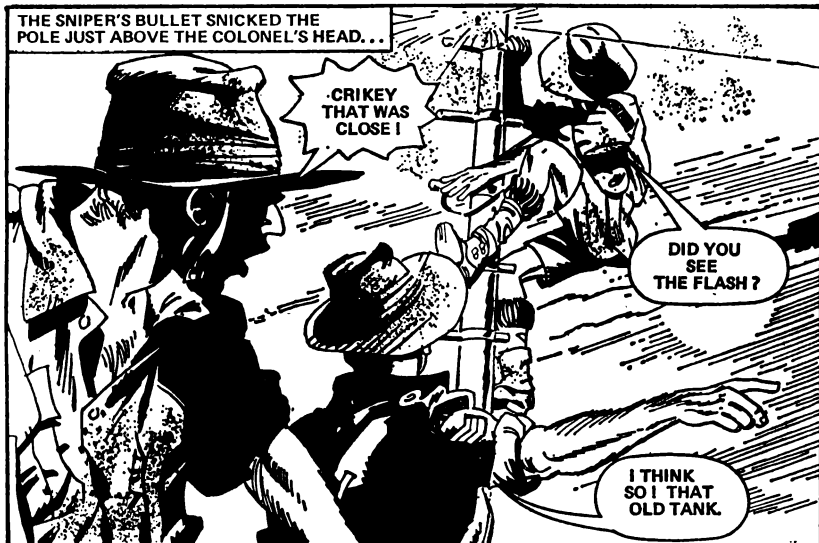
AT THAT MOMENT, COLONEL JOHNSON, RICK AND BULL WERE INSPECTING THE LINE. . .



AS THE COLONEL STARTED TO CLIMB, A FIGURE ROSE SILENTLY IN THE ABANDONED MATILDA'S TURRET. . .



THE SNIPER'S BULLET SNICKED THE POLE JUST ABOVE THE COLONEL'S HEAD...



FRED AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS WERE A HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE TANK. THE SHOT HAD SURPRISED THEM. OBSERVATION POSTS DID NOT ADVERTISE THEMSELVES.



THE TWO MEN IN THE GERMAN ARTILLERY OBSERVATION POST HAD SEEN THE FLASH, HEARD THE REPORT OF THE SNIPER'S RIFLE...



BUT THEY WERE SAFE FOR THE MOMENT. THE AUSSIES HAD REACHED THE TANK...



SECONDS LATER THE MATILDA ERUPTED. THE SIGHT WAS TOO MUCH FOR FRIEDRICH. INSTINCTIVELY, HE BLASTED OFF INTO THE DARKNESS...



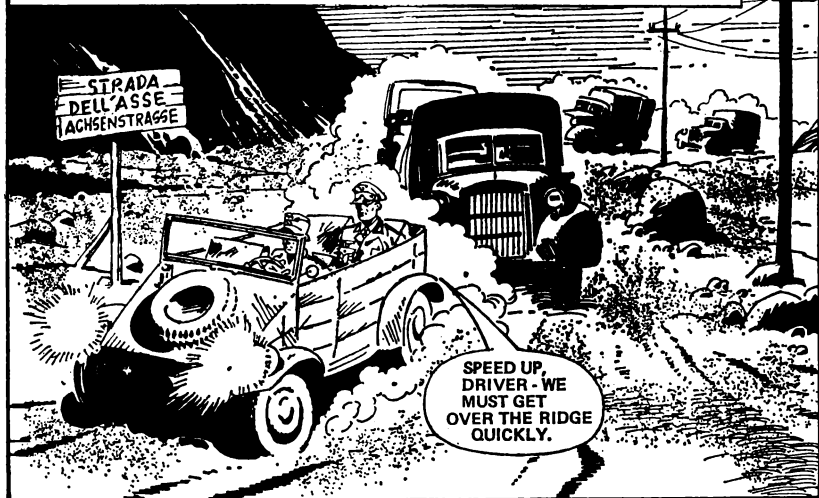
KRAMER WAS RIGHT. THE BURST HAD THREE PAIRS OF KEEN AUSTRALIAN EYES FIXED ON THE F.O.P. IN A SECOND.



SOME TENSE MINUTES LATER, THE TWO GERMAN OBSERVERS FELT THE COLD MUZZLES PRESS ON THEIR NECKS...



WHILE THE TWO LUCKLESS GERMANS WERE TAKEN BACK, THE CONVOY OF FUEL AND AMMUNITION WAS MAKING GOOD TIME. . .



NOSE TO TAIL, STEERING BY THE REAR-LIGHTS OF THE VEHICLE IN FRONT, THE CONVOY FOLLOWED THE ROAD UP TO THE RIDGE. . .

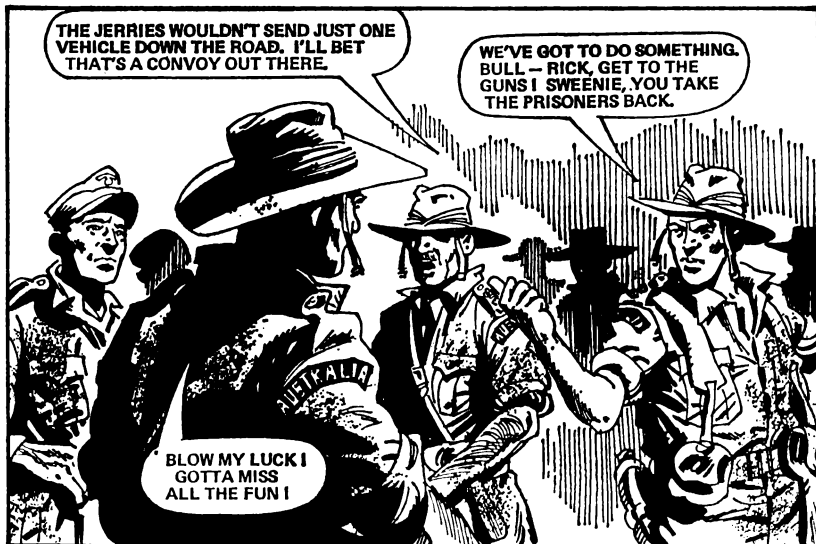


FRED WAS HANDING OVER HIS PRISONERS WHEN BULL SPOTTED THE REFLECTED GLOW OF ENGELS' HEADLIGHTS. . .



THE JERRIES WOULDN'T SEND JUST ONE VEHICLE DOWN THE ROAD. I'LL BET THAT'S A CONVOY OUT THERE.

WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. BULL — RICK, GET TO THE GUNS! SWEENIE, YOU TAKE THE PRISONERS BACK.





THE FIRST SALVO FROM THE BUSH ARTILLERY STARTLED ENGELS, RAISED PANIC IN THE DRIVERS...

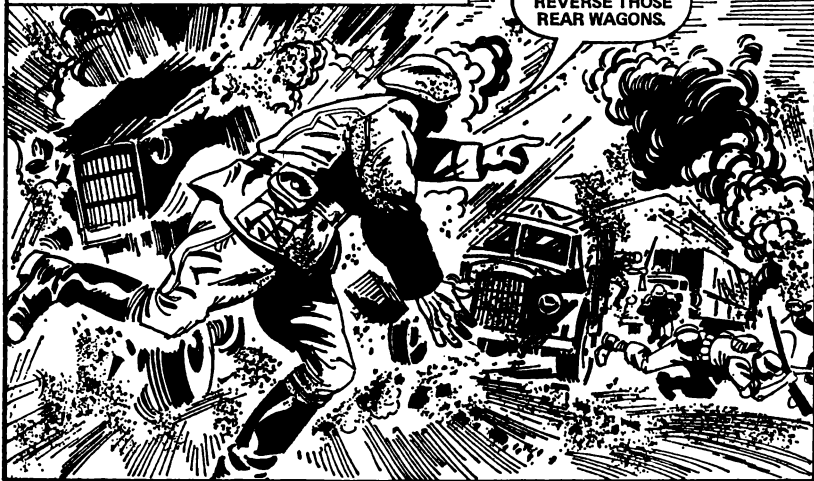


ON HIS PERCH, RED JOHNSON  
SAW HOW CLOSE THEY WERE.



THE CONVOY COULD SCARCELY HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN A WORSE POSITION. ENGELS SPRANG FROM HIS VEHICLE TO FACE A SCENE OF UTTER DISORDER.

DONNER  
UND BLITZEN !  
REVERSE THOSE  
REAR WAGONS.



GERMAN COUNTER-FIRE CAME AS EXPECTED FROM THE ENEMY BATTERIES. BUT WITHOUT THEIR OBSERVER TO CORRECT THEM, THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE FIRING BLIND...



YOU'D BEST  
COME DOWN,  
COLONEL.

NOT ON  
YOUR LIFE !  
THEY'RE WAY  
OFF TARGET,  
AND I'VE A  
BONZER VIEW  
UP HERE !

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CONVOY WAS COMPLETE. OBERST ENGELS' BID TO OUT-FLANK THE AUSTRALIANS ENDED IN TOTAL DISASTER...

AAAARGH I

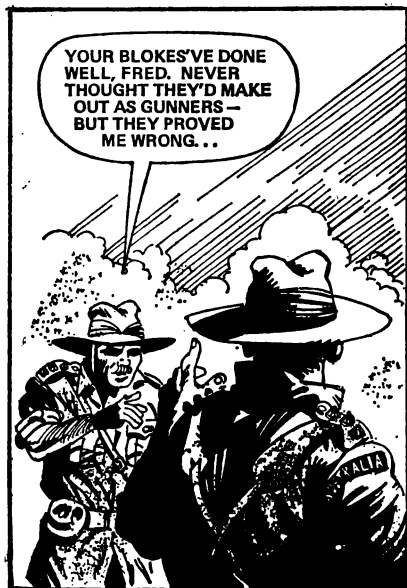


COLONEL JOHNSON ORDERED A CEASE-FIRE...

WE'VE SENT UP  
ENOUGH FUEL AND  
AMMO TO SLOW JERRY  
UP FOR A WHILE.

AND IT'LL MAKE  
'EM THINK TWICE  
BEFORE TRYIN' IT  
AGAIN, COLONEL.







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